

THE CHOICE IS UP TO YOU

May 30, 1998 (Fundamental Baptist Information Service, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org) -

The following article by Pastor Donald P. Williams is from *Hephzibah Happenings*, December 1997. The Hephzibah House, a ministry to troubled teenage girls, is operated by Believers Baptist Church, 508 School St., Winona Lake, IN 46590. We praise the Lord for these fine Christian friends and for their testimony for holiness in a wicked generation. If any of our readers are looking for a worthy ministry to support, we would highly recommend this one. Pastor Don Williams and his father, Ron Williams, the founder of Hephzibah House, are fine Christian gentlemen who stand unhesitatingly and uncompromisingly for the Word of God. As a result, they have a very small support base. Their home has made the difference between life and death for many needy girls. They also have a Scripture printing and binding ministry through which they supply Scriptures to missionaries.

BACKGROUND OF JOASH

Not every seven year old boy has the opportunity to be a king, but one young descendent of King David became king of Judah at seven years of age. According to 2 Kings 11-12, the High Priest Jehoiadah was a spiritual father to this young orphan king. Joash was privileged to have a godly upbringing.

A TRAGIC DECLINE

While Joash was under the godly influence of Jehoiadah, he did well and even had the temple restored. When Jehoiadah died, Joash listened to the ungodly counsel of some of the princes of Judah (2 Chron. 24:17-18). Soon, he was involved in idolatry and became very stubborn and proud. When God sent prophets to warn Joash, he would not listen and even ordered the death of Jehoiadah's son. He continued to harden his heart against the Lord, and he ended up being assassinated by his own servants (2 Chron. 24:25).

GODLY CIRCUMSTANCES ARE NO GUARANTEE

Joash had a great beginning with a godly heritage. When he had a strong spiritual leader looking over his shoulder, he did fine. From all outward appearance, he looked good and did very well at conforming to the spiritual leadership of Jehoiadah. As soon as that spiritual leadership was removed from his life, Joash had a choice to make. Unfortunately, he chose to listen to the wrong counsel of his peers and surrounded himself with wrong friends. His heart gradually grew harder and harder to the point where he even had a prophet of God put to death!

Joash typifies the average person growing up in a Christian home where he has a lot of potential. He has good spiritual leadership in his home and church. Perhaps you as a teenager have such a privilege in coming from a Christian home with a godly heritage. Outwardly, you look sharp, dress nice, talk good and appear to be a nice Christian young man or lady. As long as you have your parents, your preacher, your teacher or some other godly leader actively involved in your life, you do well. Now may I ask several important questions? What do you do in secret or behind closed doors? How do you talk and act around your friends when no adult is around?

What kind of music do you listen to when you are all alone? What kind of music, entertainment, and clothes do you desire in your heart?

INDIVIDUAL CHOICES

It is important to understand that what you do in secret away from adult supervision is the real you. You have a choice to make just as Joash did, to either obey and do right wholeheartedly in the absence of your spiritual leadership or to only conform halfheartedly when you are being watched. Joash went off the pages of Scripture in disgrace. He threw away his godly heritage when left on his own, and he went down the path of self will to his own destruction.

If you come from a Christian home, then you are greatly privileged; however, this is no guarantee that you will go on to fear God and keep His commandments. Take heed to the words of Elijah on Mt. Carmel, "How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow Him..." Joshua gave a similar plea to the nation of Israel; "Choose you this day whom ye will serve..."

No one else can make this choice for you. It must be made in your own heart.

WE CAN CHOOSE RIGHT

The prophet Daniel as a teenager deliberately chose to do right away from his parents as a prisoner in a foreign land, and God richly blessed him. What a tremendous influence Daniel had on his generation including several pagan kings because he made right choices in his youth.

Which will you be? A halfhearted Joash who died in disgrace or a wholehearted Daniel who will shine as one of God's stars for eternity? "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever" (Daniel 12:3).